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REMARKS

Claims 1-36 are pending. Claims 1-10, 12, 14-23, 26-29, and 31-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims 11, 13, 24-25 and 30 were objected to.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 11, 13, 24-25 and 30 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a)

Claims 1-7, 9-10, 14, 17-23, 28-29, 33-34 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 4,119,807 issued to Nahay on October 10, 1978 in view of U.S. Patent Number 3,293,369 issued to Schroeder on December 20, 1966.

Claims 8 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of U.S. Patent Number 4,835,764 issued to Sulzbacher on May 30, 1989.

Claim 12 and 31-32 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of U.S. Patent Number 5,883,986 issued to Kopec et al. on March 16, 1999.

Claims 15-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of U.S. Patent Number 5,057,932 issued to Lang on October 15, 1991.

Claims 26 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of U.S. Patent Number 3,649,763 issued to Thompson on March 14, 1972.

Claims 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of U.S. Patent Number 4,112,497 issued to Layland et al. on September 5, 1978.

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Rejection Under Nahay and Schroeder

Claims 1-7, 9-10, 14, 17-23, 28-29, 33-34 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of Schroeder.

Applicants have avoided this ground of rejection for the following reasons.

The Examiner proposes to combine Nahay with Schroeder to achieve applicants' claim 1. The Examiner contends that it would have been obvious to include the telephone exchange from Nahay with the conference switch from Schroeder to achieve applicants' claim 1. Applicants thus understand it to be the Examiner's position that it would have been obvious to modify the telephone exchange in Nahay with the conference switch from Schroeder. Applicants assert that even if it were proper to combine the cited references, the resulting combination would not make obvious applicants' claims. This is because neither Nahay nor Schroeder teach or suggest applicants' claim 1 limitation, as amended, that now recites

"a first communication node of a plurality of communication nodes connected with processorless central equipment, wherein the first communication node sends one or more first portions of node-output information to the processorless central equipment, and wherein the first communication node has one or more instances of a data interface and a video interface, and wherein the first communication node and the processorless central equipment communicate through employment of a time division multiplexing format;"

As stated in the Office Action, Nahay does not teach "wherein the first communication node and the processorless central equipment communicate through employment of a time division multiplexing format". Applicants note that neither Nahay nor Schroeder teach or suggest the amended limitation either.

Instead, Nahay discloses a telephone exchange having 128 audio input and 128 audio output lines. As stated in the Office Action, Nahay discloses only telephones as the communication node. Thus, Nahay is missing "the first communication node has one or more instances of a data interface and a video interface" element, as recited in applicants' claim 1.

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Schroeder discloses a conference system that provides time division multiplexing of analog signals, i.e., speech waves, as inputs, as stated in column 2, lines 70-71 to column 3, line 1. However, contrary to applicants' claim 1, Schroeder does not teach or suggest, "the first communication node has one or more instances of a data interface and a video interface". Thus, Schroeder, similar to Nahay, is missing "the first communication node has one or more instances of a data interface and a video interface" element, as recited in applicants' claim 1.

Thus, the clear teaching of Nahay with Schroeder is that the first communication node does not have one or more instances of a data interface and a video interface.

Therefore the combination of Nahay with Schroeder does not teach or suggest all of the limitations in applicants' claim 1, and therefore claim 1 is allowable over the proposed combination. Since claims 2-7, 9-10, 14, 17-23, 28-29, and 33 depend from allowable claim 1, these claims are also allowable over the proposed combination.

Independent claim 34 has a limitation similar to that of independent claim 1, which was shown is not taught by the combination of Nahay with Schroeder. For example, claim 34 recites, "wherein the first communication node has one or more instances of a data interface and a video interface". Therefore, claim 34 is likewise allowable over the proposed combination. Since claim 36 depends from claim 34, this dependent claim is also allowable over the proposed combination.

Rejections Under Nahay, Sulzbacher, Kopec, Lang, Thompson, Layland, Gregg

Claims 8 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of Sulzbacher.

Claims 12 and 31-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of Kopec.

Claims 15-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of Lang.

Claim 26 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of Thompson.

Claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of Layland.

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Claims 37 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of Gregg.

Claims 38 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nahay in view of Kopec, and further in view of Gregg et al.

Applicants respectfully traverse these grounds of rejection.

Claims 8, 12, 15-16, 26-27, and 31-32 depend from claim 1. Claim 35 depends from claim 34. As noted hereinabove, the combination of Nahay and Schroeder does not teach or suggest "wherein the first communication node has one or more instances of a data interface and a video interface", as recited in applicants' independent claims 1 and 34. Sulzbacher, Kopec, Lang, Thompson, Layland, and Gregg do not teach or suggest the elements either. Thus, claims 8, 12, 15-16, 26-27, 31-32, and 35 are allowable over the proposed combinations under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claim Amendments

Claims 2, 5-6, 11-12, 14, 20, 23-24, 26, 28-29 and 31-33 were amended to add the term "and". No new matter was added.

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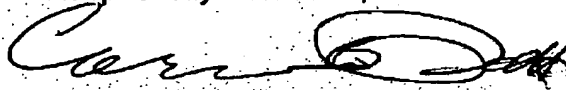
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Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that the Office Action's rejections have been overcome and that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are, therefore, respectfully solicited.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, allowance of all claims pending is respectfully requested. If a telephone conference would be of assistance in advancing the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call applicants' attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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